



SEIUHealthcare®
United for Quality Care

February 23, 2022
Katherine Jones-Newton, Consumer
New Haven
SEIU District 1199 New England
Before the Appropriations Committee

Good afternoon, Senator Osten, Representative Walker and members of the Committee. My name is Katherine Jones-Newton and I am a Consumer in the Medicaid waiver program and live in New Haven. I'm here because I rely on my PCAs, and they deserve better. In fact, I took arrest last week in front of the Capitol building because I'm willing to put myself on the line like my PCAs do for me every day.

In 2012, I broke my hip in a bad car accident and my mobility has been limited ever since. I have been able to stay in my home and live as much of a normal life as I possibly can thanks to the care I receive from home care workers.

Being able to receive services in my own home has had a great impact on my quality of life. After being in a facility for 6 months, I know the difference that it makes to be able to be in my home where I feel secure, comfortable and happy. My home care workers help me in every part of my life; they help me move, take a shower, make sure I take my medication, get my groceries, clean my house and a million other small things that I might need throughout the day. They also become my friends and they support me in my times of need and I do the same for them.

With everything that my PCAs do for me, it is hard to see them struggle. My PCAs are not paid a livable wage, which means they must work additional jobs leaving them run down and burnt out. I am so grateful for my PCAs caring for me throughout the pandemic, but I know they did so at great risk to themselves as they do not have health insurance. It is sad to know that without any retirement savings my PCAs will be lucky if they ever get to retire.

We must do better. I have taken a lot of time and effort in finding my PCAs, training them, and building trust. In turn, my PCAs make me feel secure, comfortable, and happy in my home. But they can't be secure, comfortable and happy if they can't pay their bills, support their families, and have the peace of mind that quality benefits provide. Our homecare workers work hard – and they deserve better.

Thank you for your time.